

Message Text

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S E C R E T ROME 5461

LIMDIS

LONDON FOR DEP. ASST. SEC. DEFENSE BERGOLD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO, SP, IT

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO THROUGH ITALIAN EYES

REFS: A) STATE 086118(NOTAL)

B) ROME 4633(NOTAL)

1. ROME 4633 EXAMINED THE EVOLVING PERCEPTION OF THE SPANISH PROBLEM BY SENIOR ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY OFFICERS AND THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH SPAIN DESPITE SUBSTANTIAL, FIRM POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO ANY VISIBLE CHANGE. WE SHOULD NOT BE TEMPTED TO THINK THAT THE GOI IS SUDDENLY ABLE TO ACCEPT SPAIN IN NATO OR IN ANY PUBLIC CONNECTION TO NATO WHICH WOULD BE HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL.

2. RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN ROME BETWEEN DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BERGOLD AND ITALIAN OFFICIALS REAFFIRMED STATEMENT IN REF B THAT "THE ITALIANS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY SEEKING CLOSER RELATIONS WITH SPAIN WITHIN THE POLITICAL LIMITS

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IMPOSED BY A LARGE DOMESTIC MAJORITY WHO WOULD OPPOSE AN

OPEN EMBRACE OF A FASCIST REGIME". ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS TASKED WITH STRATEGIC NATO PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES PERCEIVE CLEARLY THE URGENT NEED TO FIND SOME FORMULA FOR ACCOMADATING SPANISH DESIRES FOR A CLEARER ASSOCIATION WITH NATO.

3. AS STATED IN REF B, BOTH THE MILITARY AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ARE CERTAIN THAT ITALIAN POLITICAL LEADERS WOULD BE UNABLE TO ACCEPT RISK TO VISIBLY SUPPORT SPAIN'S ACTUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE ALLIANCE BEFORE EITHER FRANCO LEAVES THE SCENE OR THE SPANISH REGIME ADOPTS LIBERALIZATION POLICIES MORE AGREEABLE TO A WIDE SPECTRUM OF THE ITALIAN PUBLIC.

4. BOTH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE CLEARLY FAVOR INCREASED MILITARY CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE NATO COUNTRIES. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MIGHT FAVOR SOME VERSION OF THE DESTAERCKE PLAN CALLING FOR INCREASED CO-ORDINATION THROUGH THE COMBINED FUNCTIONS OF SACEUR-CINCEUR. THEY ALSO FAVOR INCREASED BILATERAL RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY INVOLVING EXERCISES AND PLANNING.

5. THE TYPE OF MILITARY-POLITICAL ACTIONS GOI PLANS TO TAKE AND POLITICAL LIMITS WITHIN WHICH THEY MUST OPERATE ARE ILLUSTRATED BY MFA'S PROPOSED RESPONSE TO A RECENT SPANISH REQUEST THAT THE CHIEF OF THE ITALIAN NAVY MAKE AN EARLY OFFICIAL VISIT TO SPAIN. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILL RECOMMEND THAT THE VISIT TAKE PLACE, BUT ONLY AFTER THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 15. BEAUDRY

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